STACKABLE CONSTRUCTION PANEL

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to wall forms of the type comprising pairs of opposed form walls each formed of a plurality of stacked rows of plastic foam panels for receiving flowable materials such as concrete. More particularly, it relates to interlocking foam panels or blocks used to build those form walls.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

A number of different systems and methods currently exist for making insulating forms for casting a concrete wall. Often, these systems comprise pairs of opposed foam panels generally made of rigid foam like polystyrene, which define concrete-receiving cavities therebetween. Those pairs of foam panels are placed one above the other so to form the wall form. Once the concrete is solidified, the form walls remain in place to insulate the wall. Those form walls are typically maintained in spaced and parallel relationship before the pouring of concrete by means of connectors comprising a pair of parallel lateral attachment flanges each embedded in one of the two opposed foam panels, and a connecting web interconnecting the flanges.

The piling up of such panels is performed on the site of construction. One object in this field is to obtain foam panels that would allow, on one hand, an easy and very rapid piling up without loosing time and, on the other hand, would allow construction of a stable and solid stacking that will not likely disassemble prior to the pouring of concrete. As can be easily understood, as soon as the concrete is poured, the chances that the stack collapses or disassembles is greatly reduced.

An example of a prior art attempt in this field is given in US 5,428,933 which discloses an insulating construction panel having a top and a bottom edge each

provided with interconnecting members consisting of at least two rows of alternating projections and recesses. The recesses of one row are adjacent to a projection of the other row, such as a checkerboard, whereby the insulation panel can be interconnected with a like member in a bi-directional or reversible manner. One drawback encounters with such panels is that the projections at the corners and along the edges tend to break easily. Furthermore, when such panel is not very thick, it easily tips over once stacked over a like panel. Other examples of insulating construction panel are shown in US patents 3,895,469; 4,229,920; 4,704,429; 4,884,382; 4,885,888 and 4,894,969.

There is thus still presently a need for an improved insulating construction panel for building form walls.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An object of the present invention is to propose a stackable insulating foam panel that will satisfy the above-mentioned need, and more particularly to propose an improved stackable foam panel that allows the construction of a stable and solid stack.

In accordance with the present invention, that object is achieved with a stackable insulating foam panel having a top side and a bottom side each including a median row of alternating projections and recesses having a similar complementary shape, the median row being disposed between two coplanar edge surfaces. Each projection of the top side is opposed to a recess of the bottom side whereby the top side and/or the bottom side of the panel can be interconnected with either the top side or the bottom side of a like panel.

The present invention also concerns a wall form assembly comprising opposed foam panels, as described above, disposed in parallel relationship to make a wall form for receiving a flowable material such as concrete and a plurality of

connectors for tying the opposed foam panels together. More particularly, the form wall assembly comprises:

- a first and a second opposed foam panels in parallel relationship; and

- a plurality of connectors hingely tying together the first and second foam panels, whereby the tied foam panels are movable between an extended position where the foam panels are spaced-apart to make the form and a collapsed position where the foam panels are brought close to each other.

As can be appreciated, the two coplanar edge surfaces of the foam panel act as shoulders or abutments for the edge surfaces of an interconnected like panel, and thus help to solidify or stabilise a stack built with foam panels according to the present invention.

Other features and objects of the present invention will become more apparent from the description that follows of a preferred embodiment, having reference to the appended drawings and given as examples only as to how the invention may be put into practice.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a perspective fragmentary view of a form wall assembly according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a top view of the form wall assembly of figure 1 showing the relief of the top side of the foam panels;

Figure 3 is a cross-sectional side elevation view of the left panel of the form wall assembly of figure 2 along line III-III showing also the top side of a lower panel;

Figure 4 is a cross-sectional side elevation view of the form wall assembly of figure 2 along line IV-IV showing an upper and a lower row of stacked foam panels;

Figure 5 is a perspective view of a connector according to a preferred embodiment of the invention, shown without its right anchor member and a portion of the web member; and

Figure 6 is a side view in partial transparency of a portion of the connector of figure 5.

DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring to figure 1, a form wall assembly (10) according to the present invention is suitable to make a form for receiving flowable materiel such as concrete or the like. The form obtained is of the type comprising a plurality of stacked insulating horizontal rows of coplanar substantially rectangular foamed plastic panels (14) abutting one another along horizontal and vertical sides thereof. More particularly, the form wall assembly (10) comprises a first foam panel (14a) opposed to a second foam panel (14b) in spaced and parallel relationship, and tied together by means of a plurality of connectors (16), as best seen in figure 4. The foam panels (14) are movable between an extended position, as shown in figure 1, where the foam panels (14) are spaced-apart to make the form and a collapsed position, not illustrated, where the foam panels (14) are brought close to each other, mainly for shipping purposes.

The foam panels (14) each have a top side (15) opposite a bottom side (17) and, as illustrated in figures 1 and 2, each of the top side (15) and the bottom side (17) is provided with a median row (13) of alternating projections (18) and recesses (19) having a similar complementary shape. This median row (13) is disposed between two coplanar edge surfaces (50) bordering the edges of the panel (14). It has to be noted that the coplanar edge surfaces (50) are preferably

provided with a width sufficiently large so as to offer an increased stability between interlocked panels (14).

As best seen in figure 3, each projection (18) and recess (19) of the top side (15) of one panel (14a) is opposed respectively to a recess (19) and a projection (18) of the bottom side (17) of the same panel (14a), and is facing respectively a recess (19) and a projection (18) of the top side (15) of the other panel (14b), when the pair of panels (14a and 14b) are in the extended position as in figure 1 or 2, whereby the pair of panels (14a, 14b) can be interconnected with a like pair of panels.

Mainly because of the manufacturing process, the projections (18) and the recesses (19) are generally rectangular. However, projections and recesses of other shapes such as circular, oblong, square etc. could also be used

In order to prevent the deterioration of the projection (18), the present invention prefers using projections (18) with rounded-corners. Nevertheless, projections (18) with square-corners or other forms, would still be efficient.

Also preferably, each of the projections (18) and the recesses (19) has two opposite substantially convex lateral sides (52, 54) which help the insertion of the projections (18) in the recesses (19).

Referring now to figures 4 and 5 and according to a preferred embodiment of the invention, each connector (16) comprises a pair of anchor members (20a, 20b), a first one (20a) embedded in the first foam panel (14a) and the second one (20b) embedded in the second foam panel (14b). Each anchor member (20) has an elongated flange plate (22) extending longitudinally and deep inside the foam panel (14) and an elongated link element (24) connected longitudinally to the flange plate (22) and having a projecting end (26) coming out of the foam panel (14). Preferably, the projecting end (26) of each anchor member (20) comprises

a stabilising plate (28) as best shown in figure 5 parallel to the flange plate (22) and extending flush with the inner surface (30) of the foam panel (14).

In order to lighten the foam panel assembly, the link element (24) preferably comprises a plurality of holes (25) therealong. However, the link element (24) may also be plane solid.

It has to be noted that by saying that the anchor member (20) is embedded in the foam panel (14), a person in the art will understand that in the making of the foam panel (14) in the manufacturing plant, the plastic foam material forming the panel (14) is injected to surround the anchor member (20), thereby strengthening the joint between the panel (14) and the anchor member (20) which thus act as an anchor forming part of the foam panel (14). More specifically, the plastic foam material, which is preferably polystyrene or any other material known to a person skilled in the field of plastic foam, is injected to surround the anchor member (20).

Referring to figure 4, the connector (16) further comprises a web member (32) extending between the foam panels (14). The web member (32) that is preferably made of a relatively flexible plastic comprises a central portion (44) having a shape adapted to receive and hold metal rods used to reinforce the concrete. The web member (32) further has a first longitudinal side end (34a) hingedly connected to the projecting end (26) of the first anchor member (20a) and a second longitudinal side end (34b) opposed to the first longitudinal side end (34a). The second longitudinal side end (34b) is hingedly connected to the projecting end (26) of the second anchor member (20b). The foam panels (14) are movable between an extended position, as shown in figure 1, where the foam panels (14) are spaced-apart to make the form and a collapsed position, not illustrated, where the foam panels (14) are brought close to each other, mainly for shipping purposes.

Referring to figures 5 and 6, a plurality of connecting elements (64) preferably disposed on the stabilising plate (28) of the projecting end (26) of each anchor member (20) in order to hingedly connect the web member (32) to the anchor members (20) is illustrated. Each of these connecting elements (64) is shaped to form two aligned ridges (66) projecting from the stabilising plate (28), and the space between them defined a longitudinal sleeve (68). A joining pin (70) can be mounted in the sleeve (68). Preferably, pin receiving holes (71) are provided in the ridges (66) for this purpose, each hole (71) facing inwardly of the sleeve (68). It will be understood that although the connecting elements are shaped to form two aligned ridges, the present invention contemplates employing other types of connecting elements that would be apparent to a person skilled in the art, such as open slotted tube-like knuckles.

To cooperate with the connecting elements (64), each longitudinal side end (34a, 34b) of the web member (32) defines a corresponding number of arms (72). Each arm (72) has an extremity (74) connectable to a corresponding joining pin (70) so as to be rotatable around an axis defined by the joining pin (70). It can be easily seen that this purpose may be achieved by either mounting the extremity (74) of the arm (72) rotatably around the joining pin (70), or mounting the joining pin (70) itself rotatably in the pin receiving holes (71). Preferably, the extremity (74) of each arm (72) is provided with a bore (76) for receiving one of the pins (70).

As would be readily understood by a person skilled in the art, the connecting elements (64) may be formed directly by molding during manufacturing of the anchor member (20). In the illustrated embodiment of figures 5 and 6, a protrusion (78) is generated by the molding process on each side of the ridges (66). In the case of corners of a wall where adjacent panels are mounted perpendicularly to each other and where obviously no web member is provided with the connectors, these protrusions, which are embedded in the concrete with the ridges, have the additional advantage of serving as anchor means for the

flanges of the connector in which screws could be inserted to fix, for example, a plasterboard wall thereto.

Therefore, thanks to both the relief of the top and bottom sides of the panels (14) and the connectors (16), the wall form assemblies according to the illustrated preferred embodiment of the present invention can be easily stacked over each other and linked together.

Once a form for receiving flowable material is mounted using a plurality of stacked horizontal rows of form wall assemblies, the empty cavity existing between the form wall made of isolating and rigid panels (14) is filled with concrete or with cement based grout. After hardening of the filling material, a composite wall is obtained with the isolating panels firmly attached through the connectors to the concrete inside-wall.

Although a preferred embodiment of the invention has been described in detail herein and illustrated in the accompanying drawings, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to this precise embodiment and that various changes and modifications may be effected therein without departing from the scope or spirit of the invention.